

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T QUITO 6540

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS EC

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA INFORMED OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF
GENERAL GONZALEZ' REQUEST FOR ASYLUM

REF: A. QUITO 6638

B. QUITO 6448

C. CLARKE/AMBASSADOR TELECON 9/2/75

1. PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA RECEIVED ME ALONE AT 7:10 P.M.
SEPTEMBER 3. I FIRST EXPRESSED TO HIM MY GOVERNMENT'S SATIS-
FACTION THAT NEITHER HE NOR HIS FAMILY HAD BEEN INJURED AND
EXPRESSED OUR CONDOLENCES AT THE DEATHS. HE THANKED ME.

2. I THEN TOLD HIM THAT I WISHED TO EXPLAIN IN SOME DETAIL
THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF GENERAL GONZALEZ' ATTEMPT TO SEEK
ASYLUM. I GAVE HIM AN ACCOUNT OF GENERAL GONZALEZ' VISIT
SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THAT CONTAINED IN REF A, EXCEPT THAT
I GAVE NO INDICATION OF THE LENGTH OF GONZALEZ' STAY, DID NOT
REPEAT ANYTHING HE TOLD ME ABOUT THE COUP ATTEMPT, AND MADE
NO MENTION OF THE WEAPONS LEFT WITH ME. THE PRESIDENT
FOLLOWED MY EXPLANATION CLOSELY BUT ASKED NO QUESTIONS.
AT THE CONCLUSION OF MY ACCOUNT OF THE GONZALEZ EPISODE I
SAID THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHY GENERAL GONZALEZ HAD PICKED
THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE WEEK BEFORE I
HAD REFUSED TO FORWARD HIS REQUEST FOR HOSPITALIZATION
FOR HIS WIFE AND CHILD AT WALTER REED HOSPITAL AND THAT
IN AN ENSUING EXCHANGE WITH THE AIR ATTACHE, WHO HAD
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DELIVERED MY ORAL REPLY, HE INDICATED HIS ANGER AT THE

DECISION. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS SURE THAT GENERAL GONZALEZ HAD COME TO US BECAUSE HIS WIFE AND CHILD WERE IN THE UNITED STATES. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE PRESIDENT SAID, HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH GONZALEZ' REQUEST FOR HOSPITALIZATION FOR HIS WIFE AND HAD SUPPORTED IT. THE PRESIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY IRRITATED BY THIS, COMPARING HIS OWN EFFORT TO HELP MRS. GONZALEZ WITH GENERAL GONZALEZ' INVITATION TO THE MOB TO COME INTO THE PALACE AND DO WHAT THEY WISHED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S FAMILY.

3. THIS STARTED THE PRESIDENT ON AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXCESSES WHICH GENERAL GONZALEZ HAD RESORTED TO. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO NEED FOR THIS BLOODY UPRISING OR FOR THE DEATHS WHICH HAD ENSUED AS A RESULT OF IT. GONZALEZ COULD HAVE BROUGHT HIS COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO HIM OR TO THE CABINET AND THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED FAIRLY AND FREELY. INSTEAD OF THAT, GONZALEZ HAD LED THIS SENSELESS AND UNSUCCESSFUL REBELLION, THE PRESIDENT'S FAMILY HAD BEEN THREATENED, AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD HAD BEEN NEEDLESSLY EXECUTED ON THE ORDERS OF THE GENERAL. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT KNEW THE EXTENT OF THE EXCESSES OF GENERAL GONZALEZ AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO INSIST ON GONZALEZ' EXTRADITION. HE THEN SPOKE OF THE BRAVERY OF HIS WIFE, WHO AT ONE POINT WHEN SHE THOUGHT THAT SHE AND HER DAUGHTERS MIGHT BE THE VICTIMS OF A MOB WHICH GONZALEZ HAD INVITED INTO THE PALACE, HAD GONE INTO A ROOM WITH HER DAUGHTERS AND HAD BEEN PREPARED TO KILL HERSELF AND HER TWO DAUGHTERS: SHE HAD EVEN SUMMONED AN OFFICIAL OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO SHOOT THE DAUGHTERS IF SHE HERSELF LOST HER NERVE.

4. THE PRESIDENT THEN THANKED ME FOR COMING TO HIM WITH THIS ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE POLICY OF MY GOVERNMENT ON ASSYLUM, BUT STATED THAT EVEN SO HE THOUGHT OUR DENIAL OF ASYLUM HAD BEEN "PRUDENT." HE SAID HE CONSIDERED MY COMING TO TELL HIM OF THESE EVENTS A "FRIENDLY ACT", AND HE WAS GRATIFIED BY IT. I MADE CLEAR THAT MY EXPLANATION TO HIM HAD BEEN PROVIDED WITH THE CONSENT OF THE DEPARTMENT, AND HE SAID HE HAD

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ASSUMED THAT.

5. THE PRESIDENT THEN SPOKE OF THE SUPPORT THAT HE HAD HAD FROM THE PEOPLE WHO HAD REFUSED TO JOIN OR SUPPORT THIS MOVEMENT AND THE SUPPORT HE HAD ENJOYED FROM THE MILITARY. HE SAID THE EVENT WAS NOW BEHIND, THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD MOVE ON, THAT THESE EVENTS WERE THE PRICE ONE SOMETIMES PAID FOR BEING IN PUBLIC LIFE.

5. COMMENT: HE SEEMED RELAXED, IN COMPLETE CONTROL, BUT TIRED. HE TOLD ME HE HAD GIVEN EIGHT SPEECHES TODAY (HE HAD VISITED THE VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS IN THE CITY AND ADDRESSED THE TROOPS) AND HAD JUST COME FROM AN HOUR AND HALF PRESS CONFERENCE. THE PALACE ITSELF, INCLUDING A ROOM IN HIS LIVING QUARTERS WHERE HE RECEIVED ME, SHOWED MANY SIGNS OF THE BATTLE AND ITS AFTERMATH: WINDOWS WERE BROKEN; AND CHANDELIERS, ART OBJECTS, AND WALLS SHOWED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE. BUT REPAIRS WERE ALREADY IN PROGRESS.

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